

# Microwave Religion #1

**Introduction.** In our world we can summon nearly anything and everything our heart desires with a tap, swipe, or the sound of our voice. It's instant gratification.

But there is nothing inherently evil about modern conveniences. Modern conveniences help us take short cuts, save time, save labor, and save money in everyday life. They even help us spread the gospel.

However, we must be extremely careful that living in a world of conveniences doesn't lead us into spiritually dangerous attitudes. If we're not careful such attitudes can lead us to practice "microwave religion." This means a religion that is instant, cheap, and carefree. It is casual, informal, and not serious.

"Microwave religion" focuses on the worshiper, not He who is worshiped! The point is entertainment, not worship and true devotion. The worshipers become spectators. In large denominational churches, "contemporary worship" has effectively become a performance inside of a "Christian-based" theme park.

I want to show you a picture of an actual denominational "worship" service that was attached to an article whose title was: "Are you creating an atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to move?" There may be a lot of "spirit" in that picture but is anything holy?

This entire philosophy makes the church nothing more than a glorified "fast food" ("fast religion") joint. It's a version of "Christianity" where you can order only what suits you. If you don't like something, no worries, you don't have to take that. After all, you're the customer and the Lord is your waiter.

Perhaps the most dangerous part of "microwave religion" is that it remakes God in man's image. There are no short cuts in true or "pure and undefiled" religion (James 1:27). We cannot have ...

## ***I. Salvation Without Sacrifice***

- A. Boxer Joe Louis said, "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die." He was commenting on the fact that every boxer wants to be the champion, but nobody wants to make the sacrifices in training that achieving such a goal requires.
- B. To serve Christ we may have to sacrifice money, time, material objects, personal pleasures and conveniences, career, spouse, children, etc. (Matthew 10:34-39; 13:45-46).
- C. But the biggest sacrifice is self (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 10:32-33; cp. 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:5). It can be done and it must be done! We can't reach the goal of heaven without it (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- D. Many people are very proud of their self-sufficiency — Sinatra song: "I did it my way." That philosophy will not get anyone to heaven (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

## ***II. Remission Without Repentance***

- A. True repentance is always preceded by "godly sorrow" (2 Corinthians 7:10).
- B. Man tends to take sin way too lightly. It took Jesus' death to overcome sin (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54; 2 Timothy 1:10; Revelation 1:18; 20:14).

- C. Repentance is more than just saying you're sorry to God or anyone else (Matthew 3:8; 21:28-31; Acts 26:20).
- D. Repentance is an essential requirement (Acts 8:22; 17:30), but it is also the hardest part. But God will help those who are dedicated to virtue (1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:13).

### **III. Righteousness Without Obedience**

- A. People are quick to make excuses for not being obedient, and some are quickly offended by the notion of being obedient.
  - 1. However, the New Testament emphasizes the "obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5; 16:26; cp. 6:16; John 14:15; 15:14; 1 Peter 1:14).
  - 2. Obedience is the measure of our "knowledge" of God and our "love" for Him (1 John 2:3-6; 5:3).
- B. Obedience is implied in 1 John 2:1.
  - 1. Obedience is not optional or just when we feel like it.
  - 2. John uses the word "sin" in the aorist tense in 1 John 2:1. The aorist tense is a "snapshot" tense. He uses the perfect tense or the "running movie" tense in 5:16 ("sin unto death").
  - 3. We may occasionally slip and fall, but we shouldn't wallow in the mud.
- C. We cannot excuse sin by saying, "God just made me that way" (cp. Ecclesiastes 7:29. Everyone has the decision to make as to whether they will act righteously. To whom has Jesus become the "author of eternal salvation" in Hebrews 5:9? To those who obey!

### **IV. Morality Without Self-Denial**

- A. Christians should be the most moral people on earth, for they are taught by God and look for a blessed hope (Titus 2:11-14).
- B. Part of walking by the Holy Spirit includes "self-control" or "temperance" (Acts 24:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 2 Peter 1:6).
- C. Even the great apostle Paul had to exercise "self-denial" (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Vincent's Word Studies, commenting on "discipline," says it's "A feeble translation, and missing the metaphor. The word means 'to strike under the eye; to give one a black eye.'"
- D. Self-denial requires putting off the old man (Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:22-24) and putting him to death (Colossians 3:5-10).
- E. We will not make it to heaven if we fail to crucify or put to death the flesh (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; 5:24). That absolutely requires self-denial.

### **V. Growth Without Diligence**

- A. It is impossible to repeal or suspend the laws of "sowing and reaping" (Galatians 6:7). This means spiritual growth requires work (Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 11:6). If you don't work, you won't grow.
- B. In 2 Peter 1:5-11, Peter encourages diligence to spur the necessary growth. "Diligence" occurs only here in the New Testament, and means "to bring in by the side of; adding." "Diligence" requires effort; it is proper work and exertion.

- C. God does His part through His mercy and grace (i.e. provides the means of salvation). But we do our part. We bring something alongside of what God provides; we have to “add” or “supply” specific characteristics to our faith.
- D. There is no one more pitiful than a weak Christian on whom a tragedy or severe trial befalls, and they are crushed by it because their faith is too weak to withstand it. It’s like a seemingly strong and tall tree that gets blown over in a storm and its hollow trunk is exposed.
- E. If only they had exercised more diligence. I’m afraid many will be sadly disappointed at the judgment. They will be “kicking themselves” in eternity because they did not “give all diligence.”
- F. Lack of diligence and knowledge will doom us to spiritual failure (Hosea 4:6). God’s word is more important to our soul than food is to our body (Matthew 4:4; Job 23:12).

#### ***VI. Patience Without Perseverance***

- A. The bedrock of patience is perseverance (1 Corinthians 15:58). It’s remarkably easy to be patient when all goes well.
- B. But what about when personal problems, family/marriage problems, church problems, money problems, health problems, etc. come? John Ashbery said, “Extreme patience and persistence are required, Yet everybody succeeds at this before being handed the surprise box lunch of the rest of his life.”
- C. Patience can only be learned through experience in persevering (Romans 5:3-4). Furthermore, patience is not complete without perseverance and endurance (Hebrews 10:36-39; James 5:11).
- D. The most common reasons that metals undergo heat treatment are to improve their strength, hardness, toughness, ductility, and corrosion resistance. The same is true of our faith (James 1:2-4). When it undergoes testing, it comes out stronger (1 Peter 1:6-7).

**Conclusion.** How about the religion you practice? Do you have a religion of convenience or conviction? Of dedication or indifference? Of devotion or apathy? Of allegiance or negligence?

It may not matter to you now, but some day it will (2 Corinthians 5:10-11; Hebrews 10:28-31). We advocate “pure and undefiled” religion, a religion without hypocrisy that focuses on the true and living God. Tonight we’ll look at six more ways that people try to have religion their way. May God bless all His saints.

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